

## The Carpet by MistressYin

**Series:** [Just A Word \[6\]](#)

**Category:** Stranger Things (TV 2016)

**Genre:** F/M

**Language:** English

**Characters:** Jonathon Byers (mentioned), Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Mrs. Harrington, Steve Harrington

**Status:** Completed

**Published:** 2018-11-06

**Updated:** 2018-11-06

**Packaged:** 2022-04-23 02:56:25

**Rating:** Not Rated

**Warnings:** Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings

**Chapters:** 1

**Words:** 1,529

**Publisher:** [archiveofourown.org](https://archiveofourown.org)

**Summary:**

Steve visits his house for the first time since his father was convicted.

# The Carpet

## Author's Note:

Back to serious problems! Sorry Ya'll!

And the phrase of the day is....The Carpet

Steve took a deep breath as his nerves got the better of him. Today he and his mother were going to visit their old house (and wasn't that weird to think, that it wasn't his house anymore) to decide on who got what. No matter the outcome, his mother was receiving the actual house, however. He had turned eighteen two weeks ago, which made him a possible candidate for inheritance.

He let his shoulders roll as he gripped the steering wheel, rolling down the window as his heart raced with anxiety.

He had met with his mother on multiple occasions since, small short-lived chats as if they were neighbors rather than mother and son.

He lowered his foot on the gas mindful of the instinct to slam his foot down on it in frustration.

He maneuvered into the driveway, gravel flying from his abrupt turn. He stopped the car, yanking the keys out and rested his head on the wheel, allowing himself to catch his breath.

He wasn't the most intelligent person in how all of this worked, but Jonathon, having gone through it with his parent's divorce, took the time to explain exactly how this was going to work and all the possible and most likely outcomes.

He wanted to be mad at the guy, but he resembled a teddy bear too much to hold a grudge against him.

He got out of the car, slamming the door a bit too hard, stuffing his hands into his pockets and pondering on the idea of alcohol or cigarettes. He shook off the urge and climbed up the annoyingly long stone steps.

“Steve.” His mother’s subdued voice cut the silence like a blade, slitting it with perfect accuracy. She was standing below him, having clearly just arrived, in a black turtle neck and matching gloves. Her hair was frazzled, and her eyes were sunken, her lips smeared with fading red lipstick.

“That’s my name,” he responded, hunching his shoulders in.

She sighed deeply, her hand hovering over the railing of the stairs, as if contemplating walking up. She cleared her throat, which sounded suspiciously scratchy. “Shall we?”

“We shall.” He drawled, turning away because he couldn’t stand to look at her any longer. Their shoes echoed in the silence, the only thing coming from his mother’s mouth little suppressed coughs, and the occasional stutter of warm breath.

When they reach the top, his hand hovered over the door knob. Her gloved hand rested on his, and when he turned to look at her, she was staring stubbornly at the door. Together, they pushed the door open.

It was overwhelming, the stench of dried blood and hard liquor, a smell he hadn’t experienced in a while. Glass still littered the floor, haphazardly swept under the fridge and old food sat on the counter.

He walked in, his boots tracking the snow from outside. His eyes travelled to the family picture they had covering the walls, the familiar wood flooring and black marble counter tops, the bad memories that the place reeked of.

He shuddered almost involuntarily.

“I-“ his mother hesitated. “I think I’m going to head upstairs, alright? You...you take what you like. We’ll make a pile in the middle of the room and compromise later.” His mother’s voice never failed to sound meek and frail, today, it was downright exhausted. She didn’t want to be her either, it seemed.

He nodded, not bothering to turn around.

His eyes roamed the room that was both foreign and familiar. Steve could only imagine how many pests were crawling around this place.

At least his mother wasn't finicky.

She couldn't be, in this house.

"Fucking hell..." he rubbed his eyes harshly, and decided to get out of the kitchen. He stumbled into a random room and leaned against the wall, closing his eyes and falling onto the carpet.

Carpet.

Old, shriveled up carpet.

There was only one room in this house with crusty, disgusting carpet. He peeled his eyes opened to check the color, and yes, dark medium beige with light brown and red stains all over it.

His breathing picked up.

He needed to get out of here. Now.

But the walls were closing in and the carpet was holding him hostage, his feet felt like lead and his arms had pins and needles.

Fear paralyzed him to his spot. He wouldn't dare move, because his father had told him to-

"Meet me in my office!"

He gripped the carpet and squeezed his eyes shut, which turned out to be a bad idea because now he could see his father's face perfectly and he was too scared to open his eyes—

A whimper crawled its way up his throat, and now his sense felt lied to. He could swear he could smell his father's aftershave, he could feel leather sliding up the skin of his thighs.

He couldn't.

But he could.

He choked on his lungs, realizing he needed air but it just seemed so hard to come by, with the panic increasing and coursing through his

veins, with his mind being tormented and his father's smooth voice reverberating through his head.

His hands found his hair, and right now he really wanted a smoke, a shot, a pill.

Just something that would make all of this go away and the ache burning in his lungs numb.

His finger's found their way to his walkie talkie, he had thought he could do this, he couldn't do this.

He couldn't.

He could.

Confusion and overthinking made his hands shake as he gripped the item he rarely used unless emergency.

This was an emergency, right?

He clicked the button anyway, he didn't have to say anything to get an answer, the easy going sound of Maxine's voice flitting through the speaker. "Steve! How's it going over there?"

His breath picked up. Maybe he shouldn't have called. It was stupid for him to have—

"Hey, whoa Steve are you—yea, uh, just try to calm down."

Tears blurred his vision. He was trying but everything was too much. The lights and the smell and the voice, god the voice, too much rung in his head like an anaconda coiling around its prey.

"1, 2, 3...just count your breathing, it always works for me, yea? 4, 5, 6..." Maxine's calm voice washed over his panic driven brain.

He steadied his breathing to match her counting, the shakiness evident with each inhale.

"Do you want someone over there? Or would you rather just talk? We can just listen to each other breathe if you want." After a moment, she

prodded, “Steve?”

“Th-third one...” he managed, his breathing beginning to noticeably slow down.

“Sure, why not? Okay, 1, 2, 3...4, 5, 6...7, 8, 9...”

With each count he breathed in, his mind clearing as it found easy stimulation. His hands calmed down and he could finally think properly.

“Thanks, Maxine.” He told her, keeping his eyes closed in fear of what he would see.

“Steve?” she waited for a response. He just hummed tiredly.

“Are your eyes opened?”

Silence spread between them.

“Can you open your eyes for me?”

He whimpered shakily.

“Hey, hey, no rush, you just got to get back to the real world now, yea? Just... open and blink and readjust.”

He followed her command, snapping his eyelids shut when he saw his father’s office chair oh god—

“I said slowly...”

He opened one eye, then the other, blinking rapidly to clear his vision. His toes curled.

“Eyes open?”

He nodded needlessly as he responded, “Uh huh.”

“Great! Good job, babysitter.” She teased with the use of his nickname, “Now, where are you? Is where you are upsetting you? Or the house.”

“The room, mainly.” His voice was even.

“But the house upsets you.” It sounded more like a statement the question it was meant to be.

“Yes?”

“But you don’t want someone to pick you up.”

“No...”

“Because?”

“I need to, ugh, I need to do this.” he tried, getting frustrated. He could practically hear Maxine’s raised eyebrows.

“You don’t need to do this alone, though.”

The silence reigned after that, uncomfortable and hesitant.

“Hey, how about you leave the room you’re in, do you think you can do that for me?” her voice was patient, as if he wasn’t being incredibly stupid by not being able to leave the room without help.

He muttered a small confirmative. Forcing himself up onto his knees first, he fisted his fingers into the carpet and breathed. Then he hoisted himself so one foot was flat on the ground. He slowly stretched it out until he was standing.

“I’m standing.” He muttered into the walkie talkie.

“You are? Great job, Steve!” she sounded highly impressed.

He couldn’t help the small swell of pride at that.

He found his way to the door knob and pushed it open inch by inch, feeling like he could breath once more when his feet escaped the deadly room.

“Hey Maxine?” He asked.

“Yup?”

“...Can you have someone come over here? I don’t want to be alone...well I have mom but—“

She cut him off.

“Anytime, Steve.”

**Author’s Note:**

Thank you for reading! This one took a while to finish, I hope you enjoyed!

Thanks again from MistressYin